



U.S. DEPARTMENT OF ENERGY

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Deputy Secretary Poneman Marks the Start-up of the Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride Conversion Facility at the Department of Energy's Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant

Deputy Secretary also tours Portsmouth Recovery Act cleanup projects to see ongoing progress

Piketon, Ohio – Today, U.S. Deputy Secretary of Energy Daniel Poneman attended a ceremony to announce that the Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride Conversion Facility, located in Piketon, Ohio, has begun operations. The facility will convert more than 250,000 metric tons of depleted uranium hexafluoride into a safer form for reuse or disposal over 18 years. Deputy Secretary Poneman toured the facility and met with workers at the site.

“With the commencement of operations of the Depleted Uranium Hexafluoride Conversion Facility, the U.S. Department of Energy is taking an important step forward in our mission to clean up the environment,” said Deputy Secretary Poneman. “This facility will keep Ohio at the forefront of the nuclear enterprise with critical expertise that will benefit the Nation.”

During construction, the site employed approximately 350 personnel, and will employ approximately 160 personnel at full operation.

Depleted uranium hexafluoride has been generated in the United States since the mid-1940s as a byproduct of enriching uranium for both civilian and military applications at three gaseous diffusion plants located near Oak Ridge, Tennessee; Paducah, Kentucky; and Piketon, Ohio. As a result, approximately 700,000 metric tons of depleted uranium hexafluoride are now in DOE storage at the Paducah and Piketon plants. The remaining 450,000 metric tons of depleted uranium hexafluoride stored at Paducah will be converted in a similar facility.

Following the ceremony, Deputy Secretary Poneman toured environmental cleanup projects that are being supported by the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. The Recovery Act included \$118 million to promote economic recovery and accelerate cleanup at the Portsmouth Gaseous Diffusion Plant. The funding is helping demolish surplus facilities, including electrical switchyard structures, cooling towers, and one pump house, and clean up 65 acres of

contaminated soils. It is also helping remove the source of the highest contaminant concentration groundwater plume on site, preventing further potential groundwater contamination.

“Thanks to the Recovery Act and the leaders who supported it, we are putting Americans to work while cleaning up our legacy from the Cold War,” said Deputy Secretary Poneman. “This historic legislation allowed us to build a stronger economy and stronger communities.”

Deputy Secretary Poneman saw firsthand the progress workers are making at restoring the environment, and was briefed on projects that have been successfully completed. In July, workers successfully completed the demolition of the 8,000 square foot X-760 Chemical Engineering Building. Workers have also completed cleanup work on the 20-acre Cooling Tower Complex.

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